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cases could be found. Double plurals as *sus-tren* and *sisters*; *peases* and *peasen*, with many more of the same sort, to say nothing of those in *-en-e* are common enough; this is, however, not nearly the same thing as two endings in one and the same word. But there is, at least, one other double plural, which seems to be unique, namely, *children*. It is of such common occurrence that its history can be traced step by step from its earliest appearance, while the dialectic plural *childer* is still frequently heard. I have even met with the plural *childers*, which is no more illogical than its literary equivalent. On the whole it seems questionable whether it is correct to consider the final syllables in *kitt-en*, *maid-en* and *chick-en* as identical. There is much evidence in favor of regarding the *-en* in *maiden* as a feminine ending occurring in Greek as *-ivva* or *-iva*; in Latin as *-ina*; and in Gothic as *-ein*. The fact that the congeners of *chick* in many of the Germanic dialects append a diminutive syllable, gives color to the notion that the *-en* in English has the same force. On the other hand, there seems little doubt that it was not so regarded everywhere; for it is well known that it performs a variety of functions. It is not likely that the question can ever be definitely decided as to the real nature of this terminal syllable in *chicken*; but it seems safe to assume that it is not the same that occurs in *maiden*. Whatever may have been its ultimate origin it is not unreasonable to suppose that in the course of time the *-en* in *chicken* came to be regarded in some sections as a plural ending; in others a diminutive. So far as I have been able to observe, *chicken* is not at present generally used as a diminutive, *little chicken* being usually employed as the equivalent of *chick*. The most general use of *chicken* is as an equivalent of *hen*; and while *hen* and *chickens* is not infrequent it is not nearly so common as *old hen* and *little chickens*.

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INTRODUCTORY FRENCH READER.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—Many teachers who are using some one of the Whitney* series of French Gram-

*'Introductory French Reader' by William Dwight Whitney and M. P. Whitney, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1891. 16mo, 256 pp.

mars will welcome the appearance of this reader, especially for the sake of the full grammatical references that apply alike to all three of the grammars in the series just mentioned. Beginning students are, on the whole, more apt to make better use of such helps than those who are advanced; and it certainly saves a teacher labor to have definite references to a well-known grammar, especially if it happens to be the grammar he is using. The obvious advantage that this 'Reader' possesses for use in connection with other text-books of the Whitney collection, might be a difficulty in the way of using it with grammars by other authors. The tri-partite arrangement and the character of the material selected for each part are not unlike other favorably known collections.

Notes that are easy to use, clear, not too voluminous, a table of irregular verbs, and references from each verb as given in the vocabulary to the table, an open, attractive page—these all are commendable things. The reference catalogue of the irregular verbs is especially noted in the preface, and the hope expressed that it may lessen one of the chief difficulties met by beginners. It will do this to a certain extent, but why will not some one go further, and give a simple lexicographic treatment of the irregular verbs in an elementary reader? Let *vais*, for example, be found near the top of the *v*-column with the definition, (I) 'go, from *aller*' not "see *aller*"; and when the student has turned to *aller* a further reference meets him: "see No. 66," in some grammar or in the back part of the book he is using. The irregular verb-forms are, after all, words much like other words; for the good of those who have to master them, it may be that they have been treated too much like beings from another world.

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A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH DRAMA.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—I notice that M. Petit de Julleville in his excellent book 'le Théâtre en France,' p. 305, repeats an error often made (see 'la France littéraire,' Grimm's 'Correspon-